

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

January 6, 2005

RE: UNITED STATES v. RENE GIL

Acting United States Attorney Kathleen M. Mehlretter announced today that former Buffalo Police Narcotics Detective Rene Gil, age 47, was sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 21 months by the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Western District of New York. Gil was sentenced as a result of his plea of guilty, in January of 2002, to an Information charging him with one count of conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute cocaine. In pleading guilty, Gil admitted that while he was employed as a Buffalo Police Department officer, he obtained and sold quantities of cocaine. In sentencing Gil, the Court granted the government's motion to reduce Gil's sentence based upon his cooperation with the government.

In that regard, Assistant U.S. Attorney J.P. Kennedy, who handled the case, stated that Gil testified at the December 2004 police corruption trial involving Buffalo Police Department Narcotics Detectives Sylvestre Acosta and Paul Skinner. Detectives Acosta and Paul Skinner, together with Skinner's brother, Detective Gerald Skinner, had all been charged with numerous civil rights and weapons charges. While Gerald Skinner pled guilty

to civil rights charges prior to trial, Paul Skinner and Acosta were tried in a three-week jury trial. Gil, together with several of the victims of the civil rights violations alleged in the indictment, as well as numerous present and former members of the Buffalo Police Department, were all called as government witnesses at that trial to show that Acosta, Paul Skinner, and Gerald Skinner, together with Gil and Robert Hill, conspired and agreed to violate the civil rights of drug suspects by, among other things, falsifying information used to obtain search warrants, planting evidence, and stealing money and personal property from persons they encountered during the course of their duties as police officers. At Gil's sentencing, Judge Arcara referred to the group as a "sanctified gang."

In addition to sentencing Gil to 21 months in prison, Judge Arcara, in May of 2005, sentenced Acosta to a term of imprisonment of 45 years plus one day in jail and Paul Skinner to a term of imprisonment of 93 months. Previously, Arcara sentenced Gerald Skinner, who pled guilty to a civil rights conspiracy charge, to a term of imprisonment of 30 months.

Acting United States Attorney Mehlretter observed that the protection of civil rights is a national priority for the United States Department of Justice and that this prosecution shows that her Office will insist upon honesty and integrity in each and every law enforcement official serving our community.

The conviction and sentencing was the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Peter J. Ahearn, Special Agent in Charge; the New York State Police, Special Investigations Unit, under the direction of Major Frank H. Koehler; and the Internal Revenue Service, under the direction of Ann Marie Coons, Special Agent in Charge. Acting United States Attorney Mehlretter

also stated that the Buffalo Police Department cooperated completely with the investigation.